

THE
FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS
OF
OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR
J E S U S C H R I S T,

CONSIDERED
IN THEIR NATURE, PURPOSE, AND EFFECT,

IN A
S E R M O N,

Preached *November 27, 1785,*

BEING
A D V E N T S U N D A Y.

BY
J O H N K E N N E D Y,
Rector of LANGLEY in KENT, and Vicar of GODSTONE in SURREY.

To which is added, a short

A P P E N D I X,

CONTAINING
SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE GREAT ADVANTAGES ARISING
FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT AND SUPPORT

OF
S U N D A Y S C H O O L S;

AND

A Submission of some Hints to the Publick, for rendering of still greater
Utility to the Nation at large, these truly Christian Institutions.

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THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE AFRICAN RACE

EDITED BY
J. H. ROBERTS

OF THE
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JOHN H. ROBERTS

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SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE GREAT ADVANCEMENT
FROM THE INSTITUTION AND EDITOR

OF

ADVANCEMENT OF THE
AFRICAN RACE

A Subscription of some time to the Journal, the Editor of this journal
Lobby to the National Agents, their truly Christian friends.

MILBURN

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ROMANS XIII. 8.

OWE NO MAN ANY THING BUT TO LOVE ONE
ANOTHER; FOR HE THAT LOVETH ANOTHER
HATH FULFILLED THE LAW.

IT is the first care of a judicious architect to lay a foundation adequate to the strength and magnitude of the superstructure *he means to raise*: The Church, *as a wise master builder*, manifests the same attention in *building up* her members, *as lively stones a spiritual house, upon him who is the living stone chosen of God and precious*:* teaching in all her services, that, *other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST*.†

* 1 Peter,
Chap. ii.

† 1 Cor. iii.
11.

UPON this principle, and with this view, she commences her select services, in their regular annual course, with Advent Sunday; that we may contemplate

B

as

as the ground of our hope, *Christ given for us*,† and the glorious display of divine Mercy and Grace, in his first Advent, or appearance in our nature as the Redeemer of the World; “the promised seed of the woman,§ who should bruise the serpent’s head.”*
 § Genesis iii.
 15.

EFFECTUALLY to impress upon our hearts the important purpose of this his first appearing, and the indispensable necessity of our being made partakers of the Benefits which as the Messiah ‡ he came to bestow; she hath brought to our view in the collect for this Day, his second Advent, as the judge of quick and dead; instructing us to pray that his Grace may

“ † This is that *beginning of our confidence, which we must hold stedfast unto the end, if we would be made partakers of Christ*—It is the ground of a Sinner’s hope—the *Anchor of the soul sure and stedfast*,” perfect and immutable in its nature, and has the same force and fullness of divine mercy in all states and circumstances of the Christian warfare.

* More fully to unfold this promise, and to accomplish this purpose of divine love, has been the end and design, not only of all the different dispensations under which the sons of Adam have lived; and of God’s providential government over all the Kingdoms and Empires of the World; but of all that has since been spoken, by God himself, by Angels, Prophets or Apostles—it is in the visible church the pillar and ground of truth—the touchstone to detect Error—and the principle by which all human systems should be tryed.

‡ When Jesus says to the sons of Zebedee—to sit on my right hand and on my left in my Kingdom is not *mine* to give, does he not mean that in this instance, they had asked what had no connection with his Office as
 so

so assist us “ to cast away the works of darkness, and
 “ put on the armour of light, now in the time of this
 “ mortal life in which he came to visit us in great
 “ humility, that at his second coming in his glorious
 “ majesty to judge the World, we may rise with him to
 “ the life immortal:” And if on the festival of the Na-
 tivity our hearts are not in tune to join the Angelic
 Choir in their Anthem of praise, it is not that the
 Church hath been wanting, in whatever might have a
 tendency to raise in the soul, a lively gratitude; or give
 a *rational* and *spiritual* fervency to our devotion.†

IN conformity to the plan she hath given us, it
 will be necessary, to take a view of the first and se-
 cond Advents of Christ, as they are revealed to us
 in the lively Oracles of God.

the Messiah, nor promised of him in that Character—and had not an inat-
 tention to this, led them to mistake and misapply these words of their Mas-
 ter.—“ If any two of you shall agree touching any one thing to ask it in my
 name, it shall be done unto you!” and are not there many Errors in the
 Church from the same Cause? How instructive the prayer! “make us to love
 the things which thou commandest, and to desire *that* which thou dost pro-
 mise!” *If ye abide in me, says Jesus, and my words abide in you—ask what ye wish*
 (dependent on the word that abideth in you) *and it shall be done unto you.*

† The select peculiar services for the four Sundays in Advent are wisely
 calculated to inspire the mind with a holy cheerfulness—implant in the
 soul a reverential fear, and provoke Christians to love and to good
 works.

IN the consideration of the *first*, we shall see there is not a possibility of doubting, on any reasonable ground, the purposes of divine Mercy; or that the God and Father* of all spirits, wills the happiness of his creatures—though creatures fallen, depraved and guilty.—In a view of the *second Advent* we shall find it equally impossible to presume on that mercy; or to make Christ the Minister of Sin: expecting the “benefits of his passion” in a future life, though strangers to his Grace and Power as a Redeemer in this present state of existence.

WHEN Adam had transgressed the divine command of his Creator, and by transgression brought death into the world; the unchangeable nature of Jehovah was instantly manifested, and a demonstration given that “God§ is Love,” “the Father of Lights
 §1 John iv. 8. || Jam. i. 17. “from whom cometh|| every good and perfect gift,
 “in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of
 “turning;” “yesterday, to-day, and for ever the same:”
 for however Sin and disobedience had degraded the human nature, and brought into the soul a contrariety to the holiness of the supreme Being, “who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on

* Very expressive is the language of the Church in her Collects for Ash-Wednesday and Good-Friday.

iniquity;

iniquity;" yet to the *Sinner* he appeared a preacher of glad tidings of great joy:—he called him when oppressed with guilt and fear; to promise a deliverer; to declare the entire humiliation of the Tempter.

AND however *darkly*† this consolatory Truth was revealed, yet was it so revealed as to inspire confidence:—fallen depraved and guilty, to have looked up to God in the abstract, even as a Saviour; to have expected a restoration to forfeited felicity, and hope from the Deity, known only in his majesty and power, his glory and holiness, might have proved too great an exercise for faith in one thus "far gone" from original righteousness: but the language of mercy; the publication of the Gospel in its first epi-

† Why the language of the old Testament declaring the recovery of fallen Man is dark and mysterious, may be understood without resolving it into the mere sovereign Will and pleasure of him who gave his word—God's Will flows from his unchangeable goodness; "*to know the good pleasure of his Will,*" is to know all happiness, because it is to know *the work of Faith with Power*—And when God says to Adam—*the seed of the Woman shall bruise the serpent's head*, and no more than this, was it not at once to demonstrate, that though the proofs of a revelation should be addressed to our reason, yet the redemption revealed was not of a nature to be comprehended by rational investigation, or the exertion of human abilities, however improved by acquired human knowledge, but would be best known and understood by attending and submitting to its regenerating influence upon the heart?—Thus much is however certain—the Doctrine of the Cross—was *to the Greeks foolishness*—and if any Man will be wise (says an inspired writer) *let him become a fool that he may be wise.*

tome,

§ Ifaiah lxi. 1 tome, was in terms calculated “to bind§ up the broken hearted;” “the seed of the woman,” one in the human nature; a Saviour partaking of the fall in all its *involuntary infirmities*, “shall bruise the serpent’s head,” repair the breach, and destroy the satanic power:—thus “faith came by hearing,|| and
 ¶ Rom. x. 17. Gal. iii. 2. “hearing by the word of God:” it was incontrovertibly in the fullest sense of the expression, “the gift† of
 † Eph. ii. 2. “God,” “a faith of the operation§ of God,” wrought and effected by revealed truth.†

To Abraham was the gracious promise of redemption renewed in the same style of mercy—“In thy seed shall all the nations of the Earth be blessed.”

FROM this Period it began to be more clearly revealed, even in the writings of Moses; in the Psalms, and by the Prophets still more explicitly; and Ifaiah
 * Ifaiah vii. xiv. 9, 6. expressly informs us, that “a Virgin* should conceive
 “and bring forth a Son; that he should be called
 “wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the ever-

† Should we not consider as synonymous the following expressions—*Unto you it is given to believe—Unto you is the word of this Salvation sent.* The Faith of Adam could not possibly be founded on *works of righteousness that he had done.*—And is it not to be lamented, that this active principle of the Soul, *without which it is impossible to please God*, should by human and subtle definitions have been wrested from its one only basis and support, the promise of God himself?

“lasting

“lasting Father, and the Prince of peace; that the
 “government should be upon his shoulders, and of
 “the increase of his government and peace there
 “should be no end.”

“HE, whose works are all wrought in number,
 “weight, and measure, bringeth every Event to pass
 “in its proper season. When the fullness of time
 “was come which had been decreed in the counsels
 “of the Most High, foretold by the Prophets, and
 “ardently desired by holy Men of old, that the Son
 “of God should be manifested to redeem his people
 “from death and to lead them in the path of life;”
 the Messiah, “the seed of the Woman,” “the root
 “and the offspring of David” appeared:—“Upon
 “them that sat in darkness and the shadow of death,
 “the light shined;” “the Sun of righteousness arose
 “with healing in his wings;” the Word was
 “made flesh and dwelt among us, full of Grace
 “and Truth.”†

† Rev. xxii.
 16.

Isaiah ix. 2.
 Malachi iv.

2.

John i. 4.

Luke iv. 22.

In his publick ministry, “all bare him witness and
 wondered at the gracious words* that proceeded out
 of his mouth.” His every action denoted benevo-
 lence and Love, to the afflicted, the humble and the
 contrite—his Miracles were all miracles of mercy;
 and the morals he taught must in the practice restore
 peace

peace on earth, good will among men.—All his Discourses were calls to partake of the divine goodness and favor—and that his severest reproofs to the Scribes and Pharisees were for this end, is evident from the compassion he breathes for Jerusalem, when rejected as her King; he weeps over the devoted
^{†Matt.xxiii.} city; laments in the most pathetic[†] language the
^{37.} blindness and hardness of their hearts: and when
^{Luke xix.} delivered up by his own people to the Gentiles to
^{41.} be crucified and slain, in his last agonies he prays
^{†Luke xxiii.} that they may be forgiven; [‡] commanding, after his
^{24.} resurrection, his chosen missionaries first to preach
the glad tidings of salvation through his Name in
^{§Luke xxiv.} that City. §
^{27.}

SUCH was the nature and design of the first Advent of Jesus, in which he appears as “given *for a
^{*Isaiah lv. 4.} “ witness to the people,” “that God willeth not the
“ death of a Sinner, but rather that all should be
“ converted and live: God so loved the World, that
“ he sent his only begotten Son into the World, that
“ whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but
“ have everlasting Life:”

How different his second coming! When “the
“ Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming
fire with his mighty Angels—not as a Redeemer
to

to preach Peace and Salvation; not to publish tidings of Mercy, and manifest his healing Powers; but to take *vengeance*—Vengeance! On whom? Let him that heareth understand—“ On them that know*
 “ not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our
 “ Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with
 “ everlasting destruction from the presence of the
 “ Lord, and the Glory of his Power, when he shall
 “ come to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in
 “ all them that believe.”†

† 2 Thess. ii
 ver. 8.

THE Prophet Daniel, thus describes the awful scene—“ I beheld,” says the Prophet, “ until the
 “ Thrones were cast down, and the Antient of Days
 “ did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the

* Can any one point of the Christian Doctrine be of more important consequence? That our eternal Life standeth in the knowledge of God—we daily acknowledge in the first collect for the morning service—and it is a truth founded on the clearest revelation—*this is eternal Life*, says Jesus himself, *that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*

It is much to be lamented, that the exhortation of the Apostle to *pray with the Spirit, and to pray with the understanding also*, is not regarded as it ought, by those who join in our Liturgy—and yet out of our own mouths will God judge us:—Surely then I may be permitted to repeat, that no one point of Doctrine more seriously claims our attention—We ourselves confess, that our eternal Life standeth in the knowledge of God; and are assured that Jesus will come again in his glorious Majesty to take vengeance on all that know him not.

“ hair of his head like pure Wool ; his Throne was
 “ like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire :
 “ a fiery stream issued and came forth from before
 “ him ; thousand thousands ministered unto him,
 “ and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before
 “ him ; the judgment was set, and the Books were
 “ opened : At that time thy People shall be delivered,
 “ and every one that shall be found written in the
 “ Book : And many of them that sleep in the Dust
 “ of the Earth shall awake, some to everlasting Life,
 “ and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”†

† Dan. viii.
 ix, xii, 1, 2.

IN the Apocalypse we have an account of the
 consummation of all things in most affecting and in-
 structive language.—“ I saw,” says St. John, “ a great
 “ white Throne, and him that sat on it, from whose
 “ face the Earth and Heavens fled away, and there
 “ was found no place for them : And I saw the
 “ dead, small and great stand before God, and the
 “ Books were opened, and another Book was open-
 “ ed, which is the Book of Life : And the dead were
 “ judged out of those things which were written in
 “ the books according to their works : And the sea
 “ gave up the dead which were in it ; and Death
 “ and Hell gave up the dead which were in them ;
 “ and they were judged every man according to their
 “ works : and Death and Hell were cast into the
 “ lake

“ lake of fire, this is the second death; and whoso-
 “ ever was not found written in the book of Life,
 “ was cast into the lake of fire.†

† Revel. xxi.
 41, &c.

THE Redeemer himself, foretelling his second Advent, adds to the description of the scene, the nature of Christian Faith as working by Love, and evidenceing itself by its fruits, not leaving us a possibility of mistaking either the principle or its effect.

“ WHEN the son of man shall come in his glory,
 “ and all the holy Angels with him, then shall he sit
 “ upon the Throne of his glory; and before him
 “ shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate
 “ them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth
 “ his Sheep from the Goats; and he shall set the
 “ Sheep on his right hand, but the Goats on his
 “ left. Then shall the King say unto them on his
 “ right hand, come ye blessed of my Father inherit
 “ the Kingdom prepared for you from the Founda-
 “ tion of the World, for I was an hungred and ye
 “ gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink;
 “ I was a stranger and ye took me in; I was sick
 “ and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came

“ unto me; verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye
 “ did it unto one of the least of these my Brethren,
 “ ye did it unto me.*

“ THEN shall he say also unto them on the left
 “ hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting
 “ fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels;† for I
 “ was

* See the Appendix.

† There is a peculiar variation of the style in the sentences pronounced by the Judge of all the Earth, upon those on his right hand, and those on his left.

To the righteous.—*Come ye blessed of my Father.*—All Blessing flows from him, as a free gift—Man can have no claim, but that which dependence and helplessness expect from his Mercy—Yet, says the Son of God, *inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, before the Foundation of the World.*—God who is Love, willeth from eternity Blessings to the human Race, and only Blessings.

To the wicked—*Go ye cursed,* not of my Father—no curse flows from the Father of Mercies, and God of all consolation—the curse is the result of choice, and the everlasting fire, prepared not for Man, but for the Devil and his Angels.—A satanic nature must necessarily partake of satanic misery; but Blessing and Curse are set before us.

In the 30th Chapter of Isaiah, appointed as a Lesson in the fourth Sunday in Advent, is the following remarkable passage.—*Tophet is ordained of old; yea for the King it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it.* But doth this declare any more than that nature separated from God is Hell?—The Day of Salvation past; Mercy finally rejected; the fallen principle—the flesh—the carnal mind intirely predominant; God, who shall Judge the World in righteousness, and the people with equity, pronounces the final sentence, *go ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*—In that instant, Nature is left
 without

“ was an hungred and ye gave me no meat; I was
 “ thirsty and ye gave me no drink; naked and ye
 “ clothed me not; sick and in prison and ye visited
 “ me not; verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did
 “ it not unto one of the least of these my Brethren,
 “ ye did it not unto me; and these shall go away into
 “ everlasting punishment, but the righteous into
 “ Life eternal.”†

† Matt. xxv.
 31.

How many important and practical truths hath the Church in her collect for this Day, brought to our view, as demanding our most serious consideration!—The same Wisdom directs her through the the whole.

To lay a foundation, to erect a superstructure, all impediments must be removed: Because of transgression a Law had been added; not only subsequent to the promise made to Adam, but four hundred years after its renewal to Abraham: It had been without God;—by the very sentence, styled by the Prophet, the breath of the Lord, Tophet is kindled; the principle chosen and adhered to, bursts forth in all its desponding horrors and gloomy fire; *the smoke of their torment ascendeth; the blackness of darkness overshadows them; and the second death prevails*—Deeper it becometh not man's understanding, weak and finite to enquire: *secret things belong unto the Lord*—let the language of revelation be humbly acquiesced in, and let us trust the God of infinite power, who is light without darkness, and love in the abstract, with the accomplishment of his own will, and the manifestation of that mercy which endureth for ever.

added

added, not for the purpose of giving Life, or to make the promise of non-effect, but that by the Law might be the knowledge of Sin, and the Law itself become our school-master to bring us unto

Gal. iii. 16. Christ. §
Rom. iii. 20.

FOR our instruction and confirmation in this leading truth of revelation, Lessons are appointed for Advent Sunday, in which we are taught the insufficiency of the Jewish rituals, or the Mosaic dispensation in all its parts, for any purposes of Salvation: that they were in themselves altogether inefficacious, for it was not possible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sin; and so entirely had the sons of Jacob perverted the dispensation given by Moses, that their solemn Assemblies were become an Abomination: The Jewish polity was in total disorder; the whole head was sick, the whole heart faint; from the crown of the head, to the sole of the foot, it was only wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores, beyond a possibility of cure or relief; and unless a small remnant had been left in Israel, looking beyond the vail of types and shadows, and expecting the fulfilment of the promise made to their Fathers, their abuse of the external rites of their religion, and the violation of its precepts would have drawn upon them as severe and total a destruction as was experienced by Sodom and Gomorrah.

GOD

GOD, by his Prophet, having shewn them their total depravity in the abuse even of their religion itself, and declared to them in the most explicit terms, the impossibility of deriving help or comfort from it; he then calls their attention to a more perfect and glorious dispensation; he takes away the old that he may establish the new covenant; he explains and enforces repentance; addresses them as reasonable beings; informs them he can yet forgive their sins and blot out their iniquities; assuring them he will one day avenge himself of his adversaries, totally destroy Pride and Idolatry, and restore and establish pure and undefiled religion in his Church.*

THUS prepared to bear the lustre of that *grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ*, it bursts forth, if I may be allowed the expression, in the brightness and power of that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Owe no man any "thing but to love one another."

To bruise the Serpent's head, to annihilate the Empire of Satan in the Soul, who as the God of this World,† and the Prince of the Power of the Air, ruleth in the hearts of the Children of disobedience 4.

* A serious perusal of the Lessons, Epistles, and Gospels, for the four Sundays in Advent can scarcely fail to throw much light upon the mind respecting the nature and acquirements of the Christian religion.

§ Ephes. ii. ^{2.} dienceſs—to caſt down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of
 || 2 Cor. x. 4. God,|| and to create us anew in the Image of God,
 ‡ Ephes. iv. ^{24.} which is righteouſneſs and true holineſs;‡ was the great purpoſe for which Meſſiah the Prince appeared; this effect of his coming, is, in its nature and power expreſſed in the words choſen for the Text, with which the Church begins the Epistle, ſelected with ſuch wiſdom and propriety for Advent Sunday.

OWE no Man any thing but Love: Let no principle poſſeſs the Soul, or rule in the Mind; Let no paſſion predominate or reign but that of Charity divine,* for he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in
 † John iv. 7. God, and God in him, for God is Love.†

Is not this expreſſly ſaying, though in other words,
 “ Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and clamor, and
 “ evil ſpeaking be put away, with all malice, and be
 “ ye kind one to another, forgiving one another, as
 * Ephes. iv. ^{31.} “ God for Chriſt’s ſake hath forgiven you.”*

* That nothing ſhort of this diſpoſition of ſoul is religion—and that nothing under any appearance whatever can be ſubſtituted for it, or be accepted before God, is taught in every page of the Goſpel—and it is matter of aſtoniſhment, how any who read that Goſpel can reſt ſatiſfied with any thing below the attainment of this ſacred principle—would not a frequent peruſal of the 13th Chapter of the firſt Epistle to the Corinthians have a tendency to awaken the mind from its fatal lethargy?

“ NEVER

NEVER could this Doctrine have been more properly enforced than on this Day, when we are considering the first Advent of Jesus, "coming down" "from Heaven for us Men and for our Salvation." "He came to seek those that were lost; § to save § Luke xix, 10. "them that were ready to perish;—" "In this was the "Love of God manifested, that while we were yet "Sinners and Enemies to God by wicked works, "Christ died for us; † for this end was he born; for † Col. i. 21. Rom. v. 1. "this cause came he into the world, not to condemn "the world, but that the world through him might "be saved." "Be ye therefore, says the Apostle, "followers or imitators of God as dear Children, "and walk in Love," (direct your every step by its light and influence) "even as Christ also hath loved "us, and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God as a sweet smelling Saviour." § § John iii. 17.

Walk in love—This is *the Wisdom that is from* * * James iii. 17. *above*, which is first—*pure*—a chaste and unmixed principle, free from duplicity in its desires and intentions, not seeking the honor that cometh of men, but the honor that cometh of God only ||—and *then*, || Ephes. v. 1, as its inseparable attendant grace, *peaceable*; actuated by one principle; having but one end and aim in all its pursuits; regulated by that "singleness of eye which maketh the whole body full of light," † it † Matt. vi, 22.

intentionally giveth no real cause† of offence in any thing, but putteth on gentleness, meekness, and humbleness of mind; is patient towards all men, and *easy to be entreated*, when offended by others; ready to forgive every injury—*full of mercy and good works*, doing all possible good to every creature, *without partiality, without hypocrisy*, in the exercise of this sacred principle:

† John xiii. 34. THE Morality † taught, and the hopes set before us by the Gospel, have a superiority beyond comparison, over all the systems given to the world by the wisest Philosophers, any Age or Country have

‡ In Colossians the 3d Chapter, where the Apostle is strongly inculcating this doctrine of patient forbearing love; there occurs in our translation, verse 13, this singular expression, If any man have a *Quarrel* against any—*Quarrel* is a rough word, and conveys a rough Idea, nor does it appear possible to bring it into any analogy with the Doctrine of the Gospel—but if the original, which occurs but this once in the new Testament had been rendered as it ought—*cause or ground of complaint*, we must have seen and admired its force,—for such is the ignorance of the human mind—so strong are human prejudices—so liable are we to misapprehension and mistake, that without any Error in the Will, real cause of blame and complaint may, in our present weak and imperfect state, too frequently arise—but so far from permitting these things to foment *Quarrels*, in every such instance, says the inspired Writer—annihilate the very possibility of a *Quarrel*, by forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

† It has been very justly remarked by Christian Writers, that the Morality of the Gospel is in itself a demonstration of the divinity of its author.

produced;

produced: "A new Commandment," says Jesus—
 new both to Greeks and Jews—I give unto you§ John xiii.
 —"for I say unto you—Love ye your Enemies, 34.
 "bless them that curse you; do good to them that
 "hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use
 "you, and persecute you—avenge not yourselves;
 "If thine Enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give
 "him drink.—Be ye merciful as your Father who is
 "in Heaven is merciful, who maketh his sun to shine
 "on the evil and the good, sendeth his rain on the
 "just and on the unjust, and is kind to the evil and
 "the unthankful; so shall ye be the Children of the
 "Highest; and in keeping this *new* commandment
 "find a great reward."*

* Matt.v. 39;
 Luke vi. 27.
 Psalm xix.
 11.

AND was it thus to write his perfect Law of Love
 and Liberty† upon the Heart, that the Son of God,† James i. 25.
 2, 21.

It is I believe universally allowed, that all the Sages of Greece and Rome
 have failed in giving a compleat System of Ethics:—How is it then ac-
 counted for by those who reject revelation, as such, that a Man of mean
 birth, unlettered, and followed by a few illiterate fishermen, altogether
 unacquainted with the learning of the Schools, should have effected *that*,
 in which the Wisdom of all Ages in all parts of the world had so evidently
 and confessedly failed?

Can a precept be added to the Christian Code, can one be taken from
 it, without producing evil and disorder?—Can the Christian Morals be
 practically observed without a conscious rest and peace in the observance?
 Could they be universally practised without restoring happiness to the
 World?—From what Wisdom could so perfect a system of Morality
 flow?

the Redeemer of the World appeared! Was it for this End he made himself of no reputation, and became poor, that we through his Poverty might thus be made rich! Well then might the Angelic Choir; Angels, Cherubim, and Seraphim; Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers; *the* multitude of the heavenly host; the whole hierarchy of Heaven, join in one grand Chorus at his Birth "Glory to God in the highest, on Earth Peace, good Will

|| Luke ii. 14. "towards Men. ||

By the Advent of Jesus an everlasting righteousness† is brought into the Church of God; a Dispensation takes place that admits of no change; a religion is established that allows but *one* principle of action, no *intermission* in its exercise; no *exception* in its objects.—*All things are to be done with Charity.* §
 † Daniel ix. 24.
 § 1 Cor. xvi. 14.
 That Love "without which all our doings are nothing worth, and whosoever liveth is counted dead before God" ‡—that Charity, the very bond of peace
 † Gal. v. 22. and of all virtues, which is "the fruit of the spirit," † and can only be "shed abroad" in the heart of Man,
 || Rom. v. 5. "by the Holy Ghost given unto him," || is to be the grand master passion of the soul; Jesus Christ our
 * Matt. xi. 29. one only Exemplar; * and the mercy of our heavenly Father towards his Creatures, the sole rule of our Conduct towards all Men.

‡ See the Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday.

AND

AND have the Pens of any of the Race of Adam been employed to invalidate the Proofs that this religion came from God! Is not its own intrinsic excellence a demonstration of its divine original, were the proofs to our reason defective? But to our reason also hath the condescension of its author granted *sufficient* evidence, nor did ever any Man, who seriously and fully examined that evidence in all its parts, find a possibility of rejecting it, upon principles of reason, as inconclusive.†

† Unhappily Men distinguished by the name and character of *free-thinkers*, satisfy themselves too generally with the subtle disquisitions and refined speculations of the avowed Enemies of the Gospel—but this is as uncandid and unreasonable, as it is to bring arguments against the truth of Christianity, founded only on the Conduct and Enthusiasm of its professors—For instance, what have the Crusades, or the wild zeal of those who engaged in them? Or the cruel persecutions that have unhappily prevailed in Countries called Christian, to do with the truth and holiness of the religion of Christ?

To screen Infidelity under such a subterfuge, is unworthy a Man of Reason, who should trace effects to their Cause.—The truth of the Gospel must by itself be tried, and by itself—in its own purity and the strength and force of its evidence must it stand, or fall.—Had Crusades and Persecutions occurred in every Century, they could not afford any solid argument against the truth of Christianity; nor could they be admitted as invalidating the authority of a divine revelation.

On the other hand, it is a weakness in its advocates to defend truth by human systems, or argue in its support in the terms of human Jargon, or the perplexed definitions of Men.—A procedure that has afforded much cause for triumph to the *Disputers of this World, and the Enemies of the Cross of Christ.*

BUT

BUT whence the Cause that Men should wish to invalidate that which alone *can*, and which infallibly *does*, connect *existence* and *happiness*? That they should desire and aim to undermine and destroy that religion, which confirms and secures the peace of Society—inspires each individual with a spirit of cheerfulness—gives a tenfold enjoyment to all the Blessings of Providence, and alleviates in no small degree the many trials and calamities, inseparable from this state of weakness and mortality? Read the Epistle for the Day, and the question is answered.

“OWE no man any thing but to love one another, “for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law,” because Love worketh no ill to its Neighbour—It violates, no civil, relative, or social Duty—it seeketh not its own—vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up—doth not behave itself unseemly—is not provoked,[†] but suffereth long, and is kind, bearing and enduring all things.

[†] Can the insertion of the adverb *easily* by our translators be at all justified? or can it be admitted without incurring the censure of adding to the word of God? the context—and indeed the whole tenour of the Gospel allows not of it—it destroys the force, power, and spirit of the Apostles argument through the whole Chapter:—and wherefore should any Man wish to palliate or excuse what is wrong—rather let us strive to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

IT

IT walks honestly as in the Day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying—it knows no plea for anger, malice, or revenge, no excuse for the retaliation of injuries, nor makes provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof—but puts on the Lord Jesus Christ, learning of him to be meek and lowly in heart, as the one only possible way of finding his promised rest to the soul, or of obtaining that peace which passeth all understanding, and keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jesus.†

† Phill. iv. 7.

PRIDE in all its forms—*sensuality* in all its workings—*Attachment to the World* in its riches, honors, or pleasures; all that is of the World, the Lust of the Flesh, “the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life,” unitedly combine to work in the human heart a rejection of the Prince of Life and Peace, where, if received, it must be to reign and rule in his temper, spirit, and by his Laws—acknowledged and obeyed as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his Church; must we not then admit it as a Proof of Wisdom and knowledge in the Compilers of our Liturgy, that they have enforced this day upon our mind and practice the Spirit and precepts of the Gospel, by calling our Attention to a future judgment?—None can then rise to the Life immortal, who in the time of this mortal Life,
have

have not cast away the works of darkness, and put on the Armour of Light.—No Man can love his second appearing, or then receive from him the Crown of righteousness, who has not fought the good fight, and been made more than Conqueror through him.†—None can then enter the Kingdom of Heaven, who have not been born again, or received a new nature from above‡—None can enjoy the Glory promised by the Gospel, who have rejected the spirit and precepts of the Gospel—No Man's pretensions to the Love of God will be allowed, who has shut up the Bowels of his compassion against the wants and necessities of his fellow creatures, neglecting the Redeemer of the World in the persons of his suffering members upon Earth.*—None can partake the benefit of God's pardoning Grace and Mercy, who have not from their hearts forgiven every one his Brother their trespasses—not only seven times, but seventy times seven.||

† 2 Timothy
iv. 7. 8.

Rom. viii.

37.
‡ John iii. 3.
Ephes. iv.
24.

* 1 John iii.

19.
Matt. xxv.

41.

|| Matt. xviii.

21.

WHAT a glorious view of Christianity—what a compendium of religion have we this Day given us in the services of our Church§—with what clearness

§ Upon a serious, unprejudiced, and candid Examination, the Church of England may probably be found the best Commentator upon the sacred volume, and her Liturgy, and appointed Lessons, Epistles, and Gospels, to afford the most perfect System of Divinity, doctrinal, and practical, that has yet been offered to the World.

and

and force hath she addressed both our understandings and our hearts! Faith and Holiness—Privilege and Duty—Promise and Precept—Obedience and its End are inseparably united—And in the Contemplation of the Advents of Jesus, (in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily) we are constrained to acknowledge that *“Mercy and Truth have met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.”*

• Psa. lxxxv.
10.

The Reader is desired to correct some Errors in the pointing, and a few mistakes in the marginal references.

Page 17, line 17—for Saviour read *favour*.

A P P E N D I X.

IT is with great satisfaction the Writer can observe, that although Benevolence and Compassion have ever been a distinguishing Characteristic of the English Nation, to which her many spacious edifices for the relief of distress in every form, and the generous manner in which they are supported bear testimony, yet never perhaps was the hand of Mercy stretched forth to more beneficial and christian purposes, than in the present day.

THE providential Ruler of the Universe has given us rest in all our Borders, and as a Nation, we are raised from a gloom and despondency, to a degree of Credit beyond the expectation of the most sanguine:—Happy for Mankind when the Promise of this Day's† Lesson shall be fulfilled, and all the Kingdoms of the Earth shall know the Power of the Advent of the Prince of Peace, beat their swords into plow shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation no more lifting up sword against nation, neither learning War any more.

† Isaiah 2d. 4th.—1st. Lesson for afternoon service or Advent Sunday.

LET

LET us in the mean time rejoice that the present season of tranquillity is improved to the glory of him, who hath bestowed the inestimable Blessing, and that a Charity, most likely to be of general advantage, is extending itself through every county in England:—What must be the glow of happiness in his breast, to whose benevolent plan and generous, as well as pious exertions, the nation probably owes its highest future internal excellence and prosperity, and tens of thousands their everlasting felicity.

It is needless to say, that this remark alludes to the Sunday Schools, first established by Mr. Raikes of Gloucester—already more than one hundred* thousand children are admitted into these Schools; and it afforded a most sincere pleasure to hear that they have been strongly recommended to encouragement and support, by the Judges in their Circuits, as a very probable means of decreasing the number of those unhappy Men who pay an early forfeit of their Lives to the violated Laws of their Country; it having been frequently acknowledged by themselves, that an idle and dissipated manner of spending the Sunday, was the first step in the road of infamy and ruin. Z

* This Account the Writer received from one who he believes well acquainted with the fact, and who is generously engaged in promoting the laudable design.

BUT

BUT independent of this view (however important from the alarming increase of the most daring robberies, and of horrid cruelty in the Robbers) very good effects have been already observed;—to confirm these favourable accounts, from personal knowledge, the Writer can happily say, that in the Schools falling immediately under his own Care, the success has exceeded all he could have hoped for, both as to Parents and Children; respecting the latter, he has seen entirely obviated the very plausible objection, that what little knowledge they could acquire in one day's instruction, they would lose in the course of the week, and has had full proof that much useful knowledge may be acquired by a diligent appropriation of [this portion of their time for that purpose.

THE Plan, in the Writer's opinion, may be enlarged to the attainment of more valuable ends than were at first expected or intended; and its benefits extended, not only to the Objects of the Charity, but to the nation at large, in alleviating the evil we at present labour under, of an enormous poor's rate.

THE price of the necessaries of Life, has for some years been advancing; to advance the price of labour in proportion, was impossible—the labouring
poor

poor saw but little probability of living in any degree of comfort, and they naturally sunk down into an *indolent despondency*, which must ever prevent exertions to rise superior to the difficulties of their situation; and *from this cause*, the necessary useful and valuable part of the people have become a most heavy weight upon the Farmer, the Tradesman, and the Mechanick—I say our labouring hands—for it cannot be supposed that a sum exceeding four Millions,† (more than double the Land Tax) exclusive of the many publick and private Charities, should be *necessary* to maintain the *superannuated* and *infirm*.

SINCE the establishment of these Schools in the Parishes, where the Writer has been called by the Duties of his station to take an active part, a most pleasing change has been experienced.

WHEN the Father of a numerous family is to perform *impossibilities*, a deviation into [a] conduct the very reverse of industry, care, and sobriety is not very uncommon; misapplying to very sad pur-

† If we may credit the public prints—the Assessment for the relief of the Poor, in the year, 1784—amounted to four millions three hundred thousand pounds—while every town, village, and publick road is thronged with beggars. Surely it is possible to effect some change—and if possible all must subscribe to the absolute necessity of it.

poses a considerable share of their scanty pittance— Assist them, manifest a compassionate attention to their Wants, and it is a motive and excitement to industry and frugality†—once encourage the Poor to become industrious and frugal, and we have made an important advance for the reduction of the poor's rate.

THAT this is something more than speculation, has been strongly exemplified in two Parishes in this County, where Sunday Schools have been opened for near one hundred and fifty Children—and the Parents having received particular encouragement to be diligent in sending them regularly and at early hours;† it has produced not only this, but many other desirable ends, and has raised in them an emulation to send them as decent as their poverty would admit; to do *all*, was impracticable—*help them*, and they will exert themselves as *they are able*.

‡ There will every where be found some few Persons so incorrigibly bad as to possess hearts insensible to every kindness—but are not there Laws which put in force for the correction of drunkenness, profaneness, and idleness, might prove a restraint even upon the most abandoned in principle.

† Though these Schools were opened in the depth of Winter, and many of the Children have more than two Miles to Walk—very few have been absent, except detained by sickness, or some unavoidable cause.

To

To extend the Advantages to these Schools in general, in the same degree as is practiced in the Parishes alluded to, would certainly prove an additional expence in supporting these Schools, but not an increase of our burden; as it can scarcely be doubted but it will soon prove a means of reducing the poor's rate in a very considerable degree.

THAT little good results from this now almost insupportable Tax, is a truth universally acknowledged—but let us realize to our Ideas—three or four hundred thousand Children of our peasantry, and the working hands in our various manufactories, *in part fed and clothed*,† employed as much as possible in useful labour in the week; early habituated to Industry; and contributing to their own support; on the Sunday—checked in the natural propensities of the mind to evil;—gathered from the streets, lanes, and roads;—brought together for the most valuable purpose; instructed in the *principles* and *morality* of the Gospel; its leading truths and practical doctrine explained and enforced;—accustomed to be clean in their persons and drefs;—regularly attending public worship; and the Parents them-

† This must in a great degree prevent the frequent applications to Parish Officers—by really superseding the necessity of such applications—and all the money thus expended we know is applied to its proper use, and a real benefit accrues from it,

selves in many instances enabled, encouraged, and inclined to attend to this Duty also.—And all at the Expence of not more than half a Million to the publick (not one eighth of our present poor's rate, and with the greatest probability of reducing that rate in no small degree) let us realize, I repeat, to our Ideas, these happy effects, and what bosom will not burn to engage in the Labour of Love!

THAT numberless Evils are prevented in the prevention of Children idly spending the Sunday, none can deny—great advantages, may be *more* than *hoped* for—surely then, none assuming the Christian Name, or the Character of a Friend to his Country, can *lightly* raise objections to rendering as useful as possible institutions so excellent, and so worthy of every encouragement—the Sum of half a million upon the whole Kingdom is in fact a trifle when compared with the advantages that may be derived.

To assist in clothing the Poor it has been found upon experience to be a much more beneficial Charity to enable them to *buy* at a *cheap rate*, than absolutely to *give*, as it not only encourages to be industrious and frugal by rendering every penny of importance;

importance; but also to be very careful of what they so obtain.*

THE returning from the Church to the School, and continuing the whole Day under the Teachers Z Eye has in it too many advantages, not to raise a desire to render it practicable; advantages too obvious to need any particular notice here.

MOTIVES to save for so charitable a purpose, and to promote so desirable an end, at least from the luxuries of Life—from the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, so solemnly renounced in our baptismal covenant—or even from the *Comforts* of Life, need not be urged on those who consider for what purpose the Son of God came into the World, or have read with Attention his own Account of a future Judgment and a Day of retribution.

* In these Schools Care should be taken to improve in every possible way the Benevolence of their friends—by checking an unhappy propensity to finery, so frequently shewn by the very poorest, in decoration with dirty gauzes, and gaudy ribbons;—and by inculcating that plainness, neatness, and simplicity adapted to their humble station;—and it is scarcely credible at how small an expence a family of Children may be made decent and comfortable: In every experiment a fuller proof is afforded that we want nothing but a generous and christian exertion through the Kingdom, to give a degree of general prosperity and universal comfort hitherto unknown—and that not at an expence, but a saving to the Nation.

F I N I S.



